

Dear Senator Saud Anwar (Co-Chair), Representative McCarthy Vahey (Co-Chair) and Members of the Public Health Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Philip G. Kent and I live in Hamden, Connecticut. In solidarity with the Regulate DOC Healthcare CT Coalition, I stand in support of **SB 957, AN ACT CONCERNING THE OVERSIGHT OF HEALTH CARE IN CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH**. Connecticut is currently the only state where the Department of Corrections oversees and operates its own healthcare system. Last year the Public Health Committee sought to set forth actions to address these issues with SB 448 which became PA 22-133. Our request is for the Public Health Committee to step forward as courageously as it did last year and implement regulation and oversight of the Department of Correction's healthcare system.

As you know, the DOC's current challenges contribute to poor health outcomes for incarcerated individuals, returning citizens and economic burdens on their families. Not only is access to health care for incarcerated persons a constitutional right, but poor health is expensive in that CT has paid out millions of dollars in lawsuits related to medical negligence with the Department of Corrections, as well as the deeper cost to families and communities of returning citizens, including taking years off their lives. Each year in prison takes two years off an individual's life expectancy. I have fought for the implementation of the Clean Slate law, and returning citizens who are seeking to rebuild their lives not only deserve redemption but the opportunity to be healthy enough to make that redemption more than a pyrrhic victory.

In closing, I urge you to support **SB 957** and incorporate these additional recommendations to improve outcomes for incarcerated individuals, DOC healthcare workers and returning citizens:

- **Establish a regulating body and oversight process for the Department of Corrections healthcare system.**
 - **Regulation:** Our Department of Public Health has not undertaken the task of regulating this very complex system before. As a State we would benefit from immediately adhering to the standards and accreditations of the NCCH giving the Department of Public Health time to refine policies specific to the State of Connecticut's needs. https://www.ncchc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021_AR_Brochure_FNL_web.pdf :
 - **Oversight by establishing a Correctional Health Review Board** to receive reports on health outcomes for incarcerated individuals and returning citizens, healthcare staffing reports, health related incident reports, provided policy and procedure recommendations.
 - **Membership composition of Correctional Healthcare Review Board should include:**
 - Returning citizens, one of which has been out less than 5 years out (no limitation to participation based on parole or probation) and one of which is female. (3)
 - OBGYN (1)
 - Infectious Disease Specialist (1)
 - Endocrinologist (1)
 - Nutritionist (1)
 - Dentist (1)
 - Licensed Mental Health Practitioners (outside of DOC staff) (2)
 - Substance Abuse Counselor (2)
 - DPH Nurse APRN (1)
 - DPH Public Health Professionals (1)
 - Re-entry specialist (1)

- Transitions Clinic/Community Health Worker who works with reentry population (1)
- Member of the Regulate DOC Healthcare Connecticut coalition or Criminal Justice Reform Advocate (1)
- Racial Justice Advocate (1)
- Ombudsman of the Corrections Advisory Committee (1)
- Connecticut Inspector General (1)

Thank you,
Philip G. Kent